

Institute for Policy and Social Research  
Center for Environmental Policy  
607 Blake Hall  
1541 Lilac Lane  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66044-3129  
785-864-2866  
Earnhart@ku.edu

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Dear EPA Freedom of Information Act Office,

With this letter, I wish to request information from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). I am a professor in the economics department at the University of Kansas. Professor Sarah Jacobson and I are conducting research on compliance with wastewater discharge limits that are imposed as part of the U.S. Clean Water Act.

For this research purpose, we request information stored in the EPA Permit Compliance System (PCS) database. We divide our request into four data groups. The first data group relates mostly to facilities' physical locations. The second data group relates to discharge violations. The third data group relates to inspections. The fourth data group relates to enforcement actions. We describe each data group in turn.

### **Data Group 1: Facilities' Physical Locations and Other Characteristics**

From the PCS database we request data on facilities' physical locations and other characteristics for all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)-permitted major and minor facilities located in all U.S. states and territories that were ever active in the NPDES system during the time period running between January, 1999, and May, 2006. For each permitted facility, we request information on the following data elements (PCS data element mnemonics provided within parentheses):

- 1.1. NPDES identifier (NPID)
- 1.2. State (STTE)
- 1.3. Facility Name (FNMS)

- 1.4. Major discharge indicator (MADI)
- 1.5. Facility type (FTYP,FTYPD)
- 1.6. Inactive code (IACC)
- 1.7. Inactive date (IADT)
- 1.8. Original permit issue date (ORID)
- 1.9. Primary mailing street1 (MST1)
- 1.10. Primary mailing street2 (MST2)
- 1.11. Primary mailing city (MCTY)
- 1.12. Primary mailing state (MSTT)
- 1.13. Primary mailing zip (MZIP)
- 1.14. Facility location name (RNAM)
- 1.15. Facility location street1 (RST1)
- 1.16. Facility location street2 (RST2)
- 1.17. Facility location city (RCTY)
- 1.18. Facility location state (RSTT)
- 1.19. Facility location zip (RZIP)
- 1.20. City code (CITY)
- 1.21. City name (CYNM)
- 1.22. County code (CNTY)
- 1.23. County name (CNTN)
- 1.24. Longitude (FLON)
- 1.25. Latitude (FLAT)
- 1.26. Latitude/longitude code of accuracy (FLLC)
- 1.27. Receiving water (RWAT)
- 1.28. River basin (BAS6)
- 1.29. River basin code major (BAS2,BAS2D)
- 1.30. River basin code major/minor (BAS4,BAS4D)
- 1.31. Facility hydrological basin code (FHBC)
- 1.32. Permit type (PTYP,PTYPD)
- 1.33. Type of ownership (TYPO,TYPOD)
- 1.34. Standard industrial code (SIC2,SICD)

Please note that we are requesting textual descriptions of coded elements using the standard notation of following the relevant PCS data element mnemonic with the letter “D”, such as “SICD” in the case of standard industrial code (SIC2).

## **Data Group 2: Discharge Violations**

From the PCS database we request data on discharge violations for the time period running between January, 1999, and May, 2006, for all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)-permitted major and minor facilities located in all U.S. states and territories. We request data for all permitted facilities that were ever active in the NPDES system during the noted timeframe. For each permitted facility, we request historical information on the following data elements (PCS data element mnemonics are provided within parentheses):

- 2.1. NPDES identifier (NPID)
- 2.2. Measurement / violation date (MVDT)
- 2.3. Discharge number (VDSC)
- 2.4. Discharge designator (VDRD)
- 2.5. Pollutant parameter code (VPRM)
- 2.6. Monitoring location (VMLO)
- 2.7. Measurement violation indicator (MVIO)
- 2.8. Maximum extent of discharge limit exceedance when considering all discharge limits (VWCS)
- 2.9. Extent of discharge limit exceedance by specific measurement form
  - 2.9.1. concentration average (VCAV)
  - 2.9.2. concentration minimum (VCMN)
  - 2.9.3. concentration maximum (VCMX)
  - 2.9.4. quantity average (VQAV)
  - 2.9.5. quantity maximum (VQMX)
- 2.10. Reporting frequency (NRPU)
- 2.11. No discharge indicator (NODI)
- 2.12. All other key sequence elements

We request that the data extract include only those records where at least one of the discharge limits, such as the average concentration limit (LCAV), takes a numeric value (i.e., at least one numeric limit is legally binding). Lastly, we kindly request that the data extract exclude textual descriptions of data elements in order to reduce the size of the extract. Instead, we request electronic copies of the two relevant reference tables providing textual descriptions of monitoring location (VMLOD) and pollutant parameter code (VPRMD).

### **Data Group 3: Inspections**

From the PCS database we also request data on inspections for the time period running between January, 1996, and May, 2006, for all NPDES-permitted major and minor facilities located in all U.S. states and territories. We request data for all major and minor facilities that were ever active in the NPDES system during this noted timeframe (January, 1996, to May, 2006). For each permitted facility, we request historical information on the following data elements (PCS data element mnemonics are provided within parentheses):

- 3.1. NPDES identifier (NPID)
- 3.2. Inspection Date (DTIN)
- 3.3. Inspection Type (TYPI)
- 3.4. Inspection Code (INSP)

We kindly request that the data extract exclude textual descriptions of data elements.

#### **Data Group 4: Enforcement**

From the PCS database we also request data on enforcement actions for the time period running between January, 1996, and May, 2006, for all NPDES-permitted major and minor facilities located in all U.S. states and territories. We request data for all major and minor facilities that were ever active in the NPDES system during this noted timeframe (January, 1996, to May, 2006). For each permitted facility, we request historical information on the following data elements (when known, the PCS data element mnemonic is provided within parentheses):

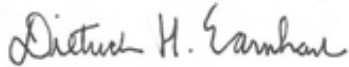
- 4.1. NPDES identifier (NPID)
- 4.2. Enforcement action date (ENDT)
- 4.3. Enforcement action code (ENAC)
- 4.4. Enforcement status (ENST)
- 4.5. Enforcement action type (EATP)
- 4.6. Assessed penalty value (APAM)
- 4.7. Collected penalty value (APCT)
- 4.8. Enforcement rationale code (EVTP)

We kindly request that the data extract exclude textual descriptions of data elements. Instead, we request provision of the relevant reference tables for all coded data elements, e.g., enforcement action type (EATP).

In closing, I wish to state that our research project operates within the Center for Environmental Policy of the University of Kansas and that we are requesting information for a scholarly purpose. Moreover, we graciously offer to make the data extracts publically available on the Center's website. Given these circumstances, we request a waiver of all fees.

Thank you greatly for your assistance and consideration of our request. If you have any questions or concerns about our FOIA request, please contact me by phone at 785-864-2866, by email at [Earnhart@ku.edu](mailto:Earnhart@ku.edu), or by postal mail using the address shown above. I look forward to hearing from you as your schedule permits.

Gratefully yours,



Dietrich Earnhart  
Director  
Center for Environmental Policy  
Institute for Policy and Social Research  
University of Kansas